

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 07347 041919Z
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
INR-07 NSAE-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 MC-02 /050 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3470
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T LONDON 07347

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: MASS, UK, SA
SUBJECT: UK TO SELL BLOWPIPE TO SAUDI ARABIA

1. LUCAS, HEAD OF FCO MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT, ASKED
EMBOFF TO CALL AT FCO MAY 4 AND INFORMED HIM THAT UK
WILL SELL BLOWPIPE, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS A MAN-PORTABLE
MISSILE SIMILAR TO REDEYE, TO SAUDI ARABIA.

2. LUCAS NOTED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN
HMG AND USG ON THE ADVISABILITY OF SELLING SUCH MISSILES
TO MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES BEFORE. IN 1974 USG SAID
THEY SHOULD NOT BE SOLD; HOWEVER, IN 1975 USG SUPPLIED
REDEYE TO JORDAN, AND TOLD HMG THAT, IF PRESSED, IT
WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IF HMG DECIDED TO SELL BLOWPIPE
TO SAUDI ARABIA OR IRAN. HMG HAS BEEN UNDER INCREASING
PRESSURE TO SELL BLOWPIPE TO SAUDI ARABIA, AND UK REPRESENTATIVES MENTIONED THIS FACT TO ACDA IN WASHINGTON IN MARCH. MEANWHILE, "THE ARABS NOW HAVE SO MANY SAM-7 MISSILES THAT SELLING THE BLOWPIPE WILL NOT MAKE ALL THAT DIFFERENCE." LUCAS CONTINUED "FOR REASONS OF OUR OWN, WE NOW WISH TO ACCEDE TO THE SAUDI REQUEST", AND HMG WISHES TO SO INFORM USG.

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3. LUCAS SAID HMG WILL IMPRESS ON THE SAUDIS THAT THEY
MUST NOT TRANSFER THE WEAPON, AND IS SURE THERE WILL BE
NO LEAKAGE OF THE WEAPON ITSELF, SO THAT TERRORISTS WILL
NOT GET IT. HMG WILL ALSO ASK THE SAUDIS NOT TO LEAK
NEWS OF THE SALE, WHICH WOULD PRECIPITATE A RASH OF ARAB
REQUESTS, BUT IS NOT SO SURE THE SAUDIS CAN KEEP IT
QUIET.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN IS STOPPING OFF IN RIYADH ON MAY 13 FOR A ONE-DAY MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD. PRESUMABLY THE AGREEMENT TO SELL BLOWPIPE WILL BE A SWEETNER FOR HIS VISIT. SPIERS

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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